Search Refworld
by keyword: Enter a word or phrase
and / or country: All countries
Clear | Search
Advanced Search | Search Tips

Topics
- Falun Gong

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada / Commission de l'immigration et du statut de réfugié du Canada

China: Falun Dafa (Falun Gong, Falungong); history, details of practice, organizational structures; treatment of practitioners; laws and practice regarding other non-recognized practices and religions

Publisher	Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Author	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Canada
Publication Date	26 November 1999
Citation / Document Symbol	CHN33180.EX
Reference	5
Cite as	Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *China: Falun Dafa (Falun Gong, Falungong); history, details of practice, organizational structures; treatment of practitioners; laws and practice regarding other non-recognized practices and religions*, 26 November 1999, CHN33180.EX , available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad3b20.html [accessed 18 June 2023]
Disclaimer	This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

This Extended Response provides information current to 16 November 1999 regarding Falun Dafa (Falun Gong, Falungong), including general background, information regarding specific events in April, July and October 1999, and information concerning China's laws and practice regarding other non-recognized practices and religions. The terms Falun Dafa, Falungong and Falun Gong are used interchangeably in the sources to refer to both the practice and the movement. However, Falun Dafa practitioners prefer the term Falun Dafa, which refers to the overall practice and philosophy (*Newsroom* 30 Apr. 1999). Falun Dafa literally means "Great Way of the Wheel of Dharma" (CRS 10 Sept. 1999, 1) or "Law Wheel Great Law," according to an Ottawa Falun Dafa Website (n.d.). Falungong (Falun Gong) literally means "Law Wheel Exercise" (CRS 10 Sept. 1999, 1); according to the Ottawa Falun Dafa Website, Falun Gong means "Law Wheel Cultivation Energy" (n.d.).

Several sources describe Falun Dafa as a syncretic practice, incorporating elements of Taoism, Buddhism and *qigong* (a traditional martial arts practice), and combining physical movements and meditation (CRS 10 Sept. 1999, 1; United States 9 Sept. 1999; BBC 22 July 1999a; CESNUR n.d.). According to the Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR), the principal Falun Dafa Website (among many) is http://falundafa.org (n.d.). According to an "Introduction of Falun Dafa" on that principal Website:

Falun Dafa is an advanced system of cultivation and practice introduced by Master Li Hongzhi. Since its introduction in 1992, Falun Dafa has attracted more than 100 million people over the world. In addition to being a powerful mechanism for healing, stress relief and health improvements, Falun Dafa is different from other qigong techniques in having a higher objective of cultivation and practice towards enlightenment. It is complete with its own system of principles and empirical techniques.

The foundation of Falun Dafa consists of a body of fundamental knowledge essential for the task of undertaking proper cultivation towards higher stages of attainment. It comprises Master Li's teachings collected in a number of books, the most important of which being *Zhuan Falun* (Revolving the Law Wheel); and *China Falun Gong* is a good summary of principle and exercise recommended for the beginners. Much of the teachings are highly classified knowledge that are hitherto imparted exclusively from master to trusted disciples since antiquity in China.

Falun Dafa has a set of five exercises specially designed to complement one's cultivation. Three of the exercises involve physical movements and maneuvers while the other two exercises require remaining still for extended periods of time. The exercises are exceptionally powerful and effective even though they are simple and easy to learn (n.d.).

Falun Dafa practitioners refer to Falun Dafa as a cultivation practice, denying that it is a religion or a cult (Falun Dafa, n.d.; *Newsroom* 30 Apr. 1999). Central to the practice are the cultivation of the Xinxing ("mind nature") and the values of Zhen (truthfulness), Shan (benevolence) and Ren (forebearance) (CESNUR n.d.; Falun Dafa n.d.; CRS 10 Sept. 1999, 1).

Sources date the modern introduction of Falun Dafa to 1992 (Falun Dafa n.d.; CRS 10 Sept. 1999, 2; AFP 25 Apr. 1999; BBC 28 Apr. 1999). According to the principal Falun Dafa Website, Falun Dafa was initially registered with the Qigong Research Society of China (n.d.). In a report entitled "Falun Gong 101", the CESNUR states that the "semi-official National Qi Gong Federation has never been seriously disturbed by the regime" (n.d.). However, the principal Falun Dafa Website states that,

It soon became clear that Falun Dafa's goal of *"genuinely guiding people to higher dimensions"* was different from the other Qigong schools, which were focussing on healing illnesses and keeping fit, as well as displaying supernormal powers at exhibitions. And so in 1996, Master Li Hongzhi withdrew Falun Dafa from that Society [italics in original] (n.d.).

The Website's report states that the Chinese authorities refused to allow Falun Dafa to register under any category, thus leaving it without any legal status (ibid.). According to the BBC, the book *Zhuan Falun* was banned in 1996 (28 Apr. 1999).

It is unclear how many Falun Dafa practitioners exist in China. According to the United States Department of State *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 1999*, the Chinese government places the number at 2.1 million, whereas Falun Gong practitioners themselves estimate that there are 100 million practitioners (9 Sept. 1999). According to the CESNUR, the issue of estimating the number of practitioners is complicated by the manner in which persons begin to practice Falun Dafa:

'[M]embership' may not be an entirely applicable concept. In fact, although the movement recommends a nine-day introduction course and frequent contacts with local centers, it also states that everybody can simply start practising Falun Gong by following the instructions from one of the many books, cassettes and websites quickly available in a variety of languages. The possibility of such a self-initiation, without a master and a lengthy discipline, is at the core of the criticism by other Qi Gong groups against Li and his movement (n.d.; see also Falun Dafa n.d.).

Information concerning the organizational structure associated with Falun Dafa is scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, Gail Rachlin, a public relations volunteer and spokesperson for Falun Dafa in New York, stated that activities are coordinated locally by volunteer contact persons who communicate with each other informally (9 Nov. 1999). According to Ms. Rachlin, there are no membership lists, membership cards or other formal structures associated with Falun Dafa (ibid.). According to a report produced by the United States Congressional Research Service (CRS):

Adherents of Falun Gong reveal little about their organizational structure. Followers characterize their objectives as individual and limited in scope. Practitioners engage in the exercises for personal purposes and have no political agenda beyond protecting constitutional rights. Followers assert that the group lacks a hierarchical chain of command and has no routine procedures for coordinating activities.

Nonetheless, the size of the demonstrations and the speed with which followers were mobilized in April 1999 indicate that an informal but well-knit and effective network of dedicated leaders and followers had developed. The Research Society of Falun Dafa and exercise instructors may have provided leadership while Falun Gong publications and the Internet enabled group members to communicate. Chinese government, military and public security officials who practiced Falun Gong may have provided crucial support in initially preventing or delaying government actions against the following. The sale of books and audio-visual products may have generated funds for movement activities. The Chinese government has referred to the Research Society of Falun Dafa as the nerve center of the movement and the Haidian district of Beijing as its headquarters

Chinese state media have claimed that Falun Dafa practitioners are highly organized. A *China Daily* report, citing a person alleged to have been the head of the "Falun Gong general training center in Zhengzhou (Henan province)" states that:

[Falun Dafa has] a strict organizational system, with the Beijing-based Falun Dafa Research Society as its top governing body. It set up general training centers, sub-stations and exercise spots in provinces and municipalities (10 Aug. 1999).

Similarly, according to a *Beijing Review* report of a commentary from the *People's Daily*:

Falun Gong is a tightly organized cult, not the insistence of Li Hongzhi that Falun Gong has no organization, and that 'practitioners gather together spontaneously'. Falun Gong's supreme organ in China is the Falun Dafa Research Society (FDRS) in Beijing. Under FDRS, there were 39 general stations, 1,900 instruction centers and 28,263 group exercise venues that controlled a total of 2.1 million practitioners (8 Nov. 1999).

A *Renmin Ribao* report of 1 November 1999 contains detailed information purportedly exposing the infrastructure of the Falun Dafa Research Society and of the national and local level organization.

The Protest of 25 April 1999

Falun Dafa first attained international notice after an April 1999 protest in Beijing, the largest since the Tiananmen Square demonstrations of May and June 1989 (BBC 25 Apr. 1999; AFP 25 Apr. 1999; ibid. 6 Jun. 1999). According to *China Daily*, protests by Falun Dafa against media organizations critical of Falun Dafa had previously occurred in Shandong province in April 1998 and in Beijing in May 1998 (6 Aug. 1999).

According to reports, the protest in Beijing on 25 April 1999 was triggered by the detention of up to 50 Falun Dafa practitioners in Tianjin the previous day who had been protesting a media report critical of Falun Dafa (AFP 25 Apr. 1999; Rachlin 9 Nov. 1999). The 10,000 protesters in Beijing reportedly came from all over China and stood or meditated in silence, carrying no banners, in a two kilometre line around the north and west boundaries of the Zhongnanhai compound, "the seat of power of China's central government" (AFP 25 Apr. 1999). The police were restrained in their response to the Beijing protestors and "politely asked them to disperse" (ibid.; see also BBC 26 Apr. 1999). According to Ms. Rachlin, the Tianjin protest was a spontaneous reaction to the critical report and had not been planned through any formal organizational structure (9 Nov. 1999).

Some of the protesting Falun Dafa practitioners, including "high ranking Party, state and military officials" were apparently able to meet with Premier Zhu Rongji, who was described as sympathetic to their grievances (CRS 10 Sept. 1999, 2, 5).

However, during the following months the Chinese authorities "conveyed contradictory messages" regarding the status of Falun Dafa practice (ibid., 2-3). In early June it was reported that three busloads of practitioners had been rounded up in Beijing and briefly detained in a sports stadium and that Falungong practice sites were being disrupted by the authorities (AFP 7 June 1999). Later in June, a statement from the Central Committee General Office and Complaints Bureau of the Communist Party of China, sought to reassure Falun Dafa practitioners, emphasizing that "[g]overnments at all levels have never banned any kind of normal health improving exercise" (Xinhua 14 June 1999). During this period Falun Dafa practitioners reportedly continued to demonstrate against media that were critical of the group, including a protest in Beijing on 6 July 1999 (*China Daily* 6 Aug. 1999), in the city of Nanchang, Jiangxi province in early July (BBC 10 July 1999) and in the city of Weifang, Shandong province on 14 and 15 July (AFP 18 July 1999).

The First Crackdown: July 1999

According to the Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China, police in several provinces had detained at least seventy Falun Dafa "leaders" as of 20 July 1999 (AFP 20 July 1999; BBC 20 July 1999). Among those detained was Li Chang, one of the practitioners who had met with Chinese leaders in April, as well as two other "senior members," Ji Liewu and Tang Xuehua (AFP 20 July 1999). These arrests sparked demonstrations in several cities, leading to further arrests (ibid.; ibid. 21 July 1999a). On 21 July 1999, the Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China, reportedly stated that at least 30,000 Falun Dafa practitioners had been detained, including 10,000 in Beijing (AFP 21 July 1999b). AFP reported that in Beijing practitioners were being detained in sports stadiums under armed police guard (22 July 1999).

An official announcement of the decision of the Ministry of Civil Affairs banning Falun Dafa was carried on Xinhua and broadcast on state television on 22 July 1999 (BBC 22 July 1999). The announcement stated that "the Falun Dafa Institute, and the Falun Gong organisation under its manipulation, is an unlawful organisation that has to be outlawed," following which a number of specific restrictions are listed (ibid.). The complete text of the notice is electronically attached to this Extended Response.

Both Human Rights Watch (22 July 1999) and Amnesty International (23 July 1999) condemned the crackdown.

On 23 July 1999, it was reported that the authorities had released persons detained in the sports stadiums in Beijing (AFP). However, a subsequent report indicates that some persons detained at the various sports stadiums were not released until 26 July 1999 (AFP 26 July 1999a).

Also on 23 July 1999, a Vice Minister of Civil Affairs, Li Baoku, stated publicly that ordinary Falun Dafa practitioners would not be punished, provided they severed ties to the banned organization and did not participate in Falun Dafa activities (Xinhua 23 July 1999; *China Daily* 24 July 1999). This position was repeated in early August, in a report that emphasized the need to distinguish between "the ordinary practitioners and the core organizers and propagandists" (BBC 2 Aug. 1999). Chinese authorities further stated that *qigong* groups that abide by the law were not affected by the ban (*China Daily* 24 July 1999). However, on 16 October 1999, it was reported that all Chinese civil servants "belonging" to Falun Dafa had been ordered to leave it "or face demotion or dismissal" (BBC 16 Oct. 1999).

Another aspect of the crackdown was the increased appearance in mainstream Chinese state media of articles critical of Falun Dafa, including Xinhua commentaries denouncing the practise as superstition (ibid. 22 July 1999a), and articles characterizing it as mentally and physically dangerous and attacking the credibility of founder Li Hongzhi (ibid. 23 July 1999a; *Renmin Ribao* 11 Aug. 1999). It was also reported that the provincial governments and other state organizations including academic (ibid. 24 July 1999) and religious organizations had publicly stated their support for the ban (Xinhua 1 Aug. 1999; ibid. 2 Aug. 1999).

A third aspect of the crackdown was the widespread confiscation and destruction of Falun Dafa materials, including books and audio and video tapes (ibid. 28 July 1999; BBC 28 July 1999).

Further detentions were reported in September 1999 in advance of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic (BBC 19 Sept. 1999). It was also reported in mid-September that, according to the Ministry of Public Security, the official ban on Falun Dafa had been expanded; however, no details of the expansion were provided (Xinhua 17 Sept. 1999). Also in September, the BBC, citing the Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China, reported that 10 publishers of Falun Dafa materials would be prosecuted on charges of conducting illegal business in advance of trials of the "leading members" (23 Sept. 1999). AFP, also citing the Information Centre, reported that thousands of Falun Dafa practitioners had been arrested and that at least 300 were still in custody as of 30 September 1999 (11 Oct. 1999).

In October 1999 it was reported that a Falun Dafa practitioner had died in custody, a death that Falun Dafa members attributed to torture (BBC 11 Oct. 1999; AFP 11 Oct. 1999). This was also the conclusion of an Amnesty International report (22 Oct. 1999, 2-3). However, a Beijing newspaper reported that she had died of heart failure and that an autopsy had revealed no abnormalities other than a heart condition (*Zhongguo Xinwen She* 15 Oct. 1999; see also ABC 8 Nov. 1999). Later the same month it was reported that two practitioners had died by leaping from trains in attempts to escape police custody

The Second Crackdown: October 1999

On 25 October 1999, the BBC, citing Xinhua, reported that 13 Falun Dafa leaders had been charged with "illegally obtaining state secrets" and publishing them on the Internet. Several days later it was reported that up to 30 people could face similar charges and that a former official of the Hubei provincial government had been formally charged (AFP 28 Oct. 1999b)

From 21 to 28 October 1999, Falun Dafa practitioners, carrying no signs or banners, began a silent protest in Tiananmen Square outside the Great Hall of the People where a draft resolution against cults was under discussion, dozens of protestors were taken away by police and detained (Hong Kong Alliance 1 Nov. 1999; BBC 25 Oct. 1999; ibid. 26 Oct. 1999; ibid. 28 Oct. 1999a; AFP 26 Oct. 1999).

As the legislators deliberated, Falun Dafa was labelled a cult in state media for the first time; it had previously been described merely as an illegal organization, (BBC 28 Oct. 1999b; AFP 28 Oct. 1999a; *China Daily* 28 Oct. 1999). Also at this time, Falun Dafa practitioners in Beijing held a clandestine press conference, appealing for international assistance (BBC 28 Oct. 1999a; Hong Kong Alliance 1 Nov. 1999).

On 30 October 1999, the resolution banning cults, the "Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Banning Heretical Cult Organizations, and Preventing and Punishing Cult Activities," was passed (BBC 30 Oct. 1999). The text of this resolution is electronically attached to this Extended Response as is the "Explanation of the Supreme People's Court and Supreme People's Procuratorate Concerning Laws Applicable to Handling Cases of Organizing and Employing Heretical Cult Organizations to Commit Crimes." According to Xinhua, the resolutions would allow the people's courts "to integrate severe punishment with lenient treatment" and "severely punish an extremely small number of criminal elements" (19 Nov. 1999). However, according to an AFP report, the National People's Congress resolution "greatly widened the scope of police and judicial powers to crack down on the group, with the government indicating that the decision can be used retroactively to prosecute Falungong actions before the July 22 ban" (8 Nov. 1999). As an example, the report cites the case of three persons from Jilin province charged with printing and distributing Falun Dafa materials between February 1992 and October 1998.

One day after the resolution was passed, four Falun Dafa "leaders", Li Chang, Wang Zhiwen, Ji Liewu and Yao Jie, who were believed to have been in custody since July, were formally charged with "stealing and leaking state secrets and organizing a cult" (BBC 31 Oct. 1999). According to Xinhua the four were "key members of the Research Society of Falun Dafa" and were charged under Article 300 of the *Criminal Law* and other provisions (Xinhua 31 Oct. 1999). On 3 November 1999 the first charges were laid under the new resolution, against four Falun Dafa practititioners charged with organizing an illegal gathering in Haikou, Hainan province (BBC 3 Nov. 1999; AFP 6 Nov. 1999; ibid. 8 Nov. 1999). On 12 November 1999 the leader of the Haikou group was convicted of "using an evil cult to violate the law" and of escaping from police custody and sentenced to twelve years in prison (BBC 12 Nov. 1999; see also Xinhua 12 Nov. 1999). Others convicted at the same time were sentenced to between two and seven years (ibid.). Chinese authorities announced that charges had been laid against 111 Falun Dafa practitioners, a figure that does not include persons sentenced administratively, such as persons sentenced to reeducation through labour (*laodong jiaoyang*) (ibid. 8 Nov. 1999; ABC 8 Nov. 1999; HRW 9 Nov. 1999). It also reported in early November 1999 that Falun Dafa practitioners had been sentenced without trial to reeducation through labour for up to three years in Hebei and Jilin provinces (AFP 6 Nov. 1999; see also ibid. 7 Nov. 1999).

According to a spokesperson for the State Council, nearly 1,000 Falun Dafa demonstrators had been taken into custody by police in Beijing in late October and early November 1999 (ABC 8 Nov. 1999).According to the spokesman, the detainees were given lectures on the "evils" of Falun Dafa, following which most were sent back to their home provinces, although officials admitted that up to 60 per cent of those sent back returned to Beijing to rejoin the protest (ibid.).

On 16 November 1999 it was reported that the Falun Dafa protestors in Beijing had for the first time attempted to display a banner in a protest that coincided with the visit of United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan (BBC 16 Nov. 1999). Forty protestors were taken into custody by police, who also detained several foreign journalists (ibid.).

As was the case in July, Amnesty International (28 Oct. 1999) and Human Rights Watch (9 Nov. 1999) condemned the crackdown, providing details of arrests, detentions and ill treatment of Falun Dafa practitioners.

China's laws and practice regarding other non-recognized practices

There are historical precedents for the current crackdown against Falun Dafa and other movements, dating from the 19th century Taiping and Boxer rebellions (AFP 26 Apr. 1999; *Newsroom* 30 Apr. 1999). In fact, concurrent with the crackdown on Falun Dafa, other non-recognized practices, including religious practices, have also received the attention of the Chinese authorities. Less than a week after the April 1999 demonstration by Falun Dafa practitioners outside the Zhongnanhai compound in Beijing, an AFP report, which included a reference to a report in the *China Youth Daily*, provided a summary of the prosecution of cult leaders, including the 1995 execution of the founder of the "Peiliwang - Heavenly Kingdom of the Resurrected King" sect and the impending retrial of founders of the "Zhu Shen Jiao - Supreme Spirit" sect on charges of rape (AFP 30 Apr. 1999). The following month police in Chongqing detained 71 followers of the "Disciple Sect" on suspicion of having plotted to assassinate a local official (ibid. 24 May 1999). It was also reported in August 1999 that police were monitoring another *qigong*-based group, the "Xiang Gong," a group that was reportedly officially registered with the Qigong Association (AFP 14 Aug. 1999). Immediately after the passage of the resolution banning cults, leaders of two other movements, the "Way of Compassion" in Hubei province and the "National Way" were arrested (BBC 2 Nov. 1999).

In spite of these measures and those taken against Falun Dafa, other "mystical groups" are reportedly continuing to recruit members, according to an AFP report that lists a number of *qigong*-derived practices (26 July 1999b).

For information concerning Falun Dafa in Fujian province, current to October 1999, please refer to CHN33002.EX of 8 October 1999. For information concerning Falun Dafa in Liaoning province, current to November 1999, please refer to CHN32861.E of 23 November 1999. Both Responses are available in the Regional Documentation Centres, the REFINFO database and the IRB's Website at .

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

ABC. 8 November 1999. John Leicester. "Falun Gong Keeps Reappearing." [Accessed 10 Nov. 1999]

Agence France Presse (AFP). [Hong Kong, in English]. 8 November 1999. "More on PRC Delays First Trial of Falungong Follower." (FBIS-CHI-1999-1108 8 Nov. 1999/WNC)

_____. 7 November 1999. "Labour Camp Likely for Falungong Protestors." (FBIS-CHI-1999-1107 7 Nov. 1999/WNC)

_____. 6 November 1999. "9 PRC Sect Leaders Sent to Work Camps Without Trials." (FBIS-CHI-1999-1106 6 Nov. 1999/WNC)

_____. 28 October 1999a. "Further Crackdown Feared as Falungong Labelled Cult." (FBIS-CHI-1999-1028 28 Oct. 1999/WNC)

_____. 28 October 1999b. "Rights Group Says Falungong Trials to Begin Next Week." (FBIS-CHI-1999-1028 28 Oct. 1999/WNC)

_____. 27 October 1999. "Two Falungong Followers Die in Police Custody." (FBIS-CHI-1999-1027 27 Oct. 1999/WNC)

_____. 26 October 1999. "Police Continue Round-up of Falungong Followers." (FBIS-CHI-1999-1026 26 Oct. 1999/WNC)

_____. 11 October 1999. "Further on Falungong Beating Death, Further Arrests." (FBIS-CHI-1999-1011 11 Oct. 1999/WNC)

_____. 14 August 1999. "Police Monitoring 30 Million Qigong Practitioners." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0814 14 Aug. 1999/WNC)

_____. 26 July 1999a. "Falungong Members Said Freed From Beijing Stadium." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0726 26 July 1999/WNC)

_____. 26 July 1999b. Elisabeth Zingg. "Sects Keep Up Recruitment Despite Falungong Ban." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0726 26 July 1999/WNC)

_____. 22 July 1999. "Beijing Continues Rounding Up Falungong Members." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0721 23 July 1999/WNC)

_____. 21 July 1999a. "21,000 Falungong Protest Arrests in Southern China." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0721 21 July 1999/WNC)

_____. 21 July 1999b. "PRC Police Round Up Thousands of Falungong Members." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0721 21 July 1999/WNC)

_____. 20 July 1999. "Thousand Protest Detention of Falungong Leaders." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0720 20 July 1999/WNC)

_____. 18 July 1999. "5,000 Falungong Members Demonstrate in NE China." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0718 18 July 1999/WNC)

_____. 7 June 1999. "Official Says Falungong Members Returned Home." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0607 7 June 1999/WNC)

_____. 6 June 1999. "More on Police Round Up Falungong Members." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0606 6 June 1999/WNC)

_____. 24 May 1999. "Police in SW PRC Break Up Sect, Detain 71 Followers." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0524 24 May 1999/WNC)

_____. 30 April 1999. "Doomsday Cult Founder to Face Death Sentence." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0430 30 Apr. 1999/WNC)

_____. 26 April 1999. "Religious Sects Shake Foundations of Power in PRC." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0426 26 Apr. 1999/WNC)

_____. 25 April 1999. "Further on Largest Demonstration Since Tiananmen." (FBIS-CHI-0425 25 Apr. 1999/WNC)

Amnesty International. 28 October 1999. "China: Torture and Repression of Falun Gong." [Accessed 12 Nov. 1999]

_____. 22 October 1999. *People's Republic of China: Reports of Torture and Ill-Treatment of Followers of Falun Gong*. AI Index: ASA 17/54/99.

_____. 23 July 1999. "Falungong Movement Detentions: Alienating and Potentially Destabilizing." AI Index: ASA 17/31/99

BBC. 16 November 1999. "Falun Gong Protest Quashed." [Accessed 16 Nov. 1999]

_____. 12 November 1999. "Falun Gong Leader Gets 12 Years." [Accessed 12 Nov. 1999]

_____. 8 November 1999. "Mass Trials for Falun Gong." [Accessed 8 Nov. 1999]

_____. 3 November 1999. "Falun Gong Followers Face Jail." [Accessed 10 Nov. 1999]

_____. 2 November 1999. "Sect Leaders Arrested in China." [Accessed 10 Nov. 1999]

_____. 31 October 1999. "Falun Gong Leaders Charged." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 30 October 1999. "Text of Chinese Parliament Resolution Banning 'Heretic Cults'." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 28 October 1999a. "Falun Gong Followers Call for Help." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 28 October 1998b. "China Hits Out at Sect." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 26 October 1999. "China Detains Tiananmen Protestors." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 25 October 1999. "China Accuses Sect Leaders." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 16 October 1999. "New Action Against China Meditation Sect." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 11 October 1999. "Falun Gong Detainee 'Beaten to Death'." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 23 September 1999. "China to Prosecute Falungong Supporters." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 19 September 1999. "300 Falungong Members Reported Detained in China." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 2 August 1999. "Beijing's Offer to Falun Gong." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 28 July 1999. "China Destroys Sect Books." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 27 July 1999. "Text: China Attacks 'Superstition'." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 23 July 1999a. "Official Commentary Slams Falun Gong 'Fallacies'." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 22 July 1999. "Text of Notice Banning Sect." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 20 July 1999. "Religious Sect Members Detained in China." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 10 July 1999. "Meditation Group Protests in China." [Accessed 12 Nov. 1999]

_____. 28 April 1999. James Miles. "Falun Gong: A New Cult Emerges." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 26 April 1999. Duncan Hewitt. "Chinese Fight for Right to Meditate." [Accessed 12 Nov. 1999]

_____. 25 April 1999. "Meditation Protestors on Beijing Streets." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

Beijing Review. 8 November 1999. Vol. 42, No. 45. "Highlight Rule of Law and Punish Cults." [Accessed 16 Nov. 1999]

Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR) [Torino, Italy]. n.d. Massimo Introvigne. "Falun Gong 101." [Accessed 22 Nov. 1999]

China Daily. 28 October 1999. "Falun Gong Revealed as Structured Cult." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 10 August 1999. "Falun Gong is Well Organized: Insiders." [Accessed 23 Nov. 1999]

_____. 6 August 1999. Xiao Jiang. "List of Major Demonstrations." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

_____. 24 July 1999. Jaing Jingen. "Ban Won't Affect Qigong, Religions." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

Congressional Research Service (CRS). Washington, DC. 10 September 1999. Thomas Lum. *CRS Report for Congress*. "China and 'Falun Gong': Implications and Options for U.S. Policy."

Falun Dafa. n.d. "Introduction of Falun Dafa." [Accessed 30 Oct. 1999]

Falun Dafa, Ottawa. n.d. "Cultural Background." [Accessed 17 Nov. 1999]

Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China (Hong Kong Alliance). 1 November 1999. *China Key No. 2.*

Human Rights Watch (HRW) [New York]. 9 November 1999. "China Uses 'Rule of Law' to Justify Falun Gong Crackdown." [Accessed 12 Nov. 1999]

_____. 22 July 1999. "U.N. Asked to Intervene to Protect Falun Gong's Rights." [Accessed 12 Nov. 1999]

Newsroom. 30 April 1999. "Home Grown Chinese Sect Presents Dilemma for Communist Regime." [Accessed 31 Oct. 1999]

Rachlin, Gail. Falun Dafa spokesperson and public relations volunteer, New York. 9 November 1999. Telephone interview.

Renmin Ribao [Beijing, in Chinese]. 1 November 1999. "On Revealing Falungong Multiple Echelons." (FBIS-CHI-1999-1101 1 Nov. 1999/WNC)

_____. 11 August 1999. "Renmin Ribao Lists Falungong Illegality." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0811 11 Aug. 1999/WNC)

_____. 24 July 1999. "Provinces Support Falungong Ban." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0726 26 July 1999/WNC)

United States, Department of State. 9 September 1999. "*Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 1999: China*." [Accessed 16 Nov. 1999]

Xinhua. [Beijing, in Chinese]. 19 November 1999. Niu Aimin and Li Xu. "Beijing Courts to Crack Down on Falungong." (FBIS-CHI-1999-1119 19 Nov. 1999/WNC)

_____. 12 November 1999. "Punishment Given to 'Falungong' Culprits." (FBIS-CHI-1999-1112 12 Nov. 1999/WNC)

_____. [Beijing, in English]. 31 October 1999. "Police Detail Charges Against Four Key Falungong Members." (FBIS-CHI-1999-1030 31 Oct. 1999/WNC)

_____. 17 September 1999. "PRC Police Strike Hard Against Superstition." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0917 17 Sept. 1999/WNC)

_____. 2 August 1999. "PRC Religious Leaders Support Falungong Ban." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0802 2 Aug. 1999/WNC)

_____. 1 August 1999. "Head of Buddhist Association Supports Falungong Crackdown." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0801 1 Aug. 1999/WNC)

_____. 28 July 1999. "China Confiscates 1.55 Million Falungong Publications." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0728 28 July 1999/WNC)

_____. 23 July 1999. "Official Says Falungong Ban Follows Chinese Law." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0723 23 July 1999/WNC)

_____. [Beijing, in Chinese]. 14 June 1999. "Statement Issued on Falungong Activities." (FBIS-CHI-1999-0614 14 June 1999/WNC)

Zhongguo Xinwen She [Beijing, in Chinese]. "Death of Falungong Practitioner Attributed to Illness." (FBIS-CHI-1999-10-16 15 Oct. 1999/WNC)

Electronic Attachments

BBC. 22 July 1999. "Text of Notice Banning Sect."

Beijing Review. 8 November 1999. Vol. 42, No. 45. "Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Banning Heretical Cult Organizations, and Preventing and Punishing Cult Activities."

_____. 8 November 1999. Vol. 42, No. 45. "Explanations of the Supreme People's Court and Supreme People's Procuratorate Concerning Laws Applicable to Handling Cases of Organizing and Employing Heretical Cult Organizations to Commit Crimes."

Text of the 22 July 1999 Announcement Banning Falun Dafa

The People's Republic of China Ministry of Civil Affairs decided on 22 July 1999 that the Falun Dafa Institute, and the Falun Gong organisation under its manipulation, is an unlawful organisation that has to be outlawed.

The following announcement is made in accordance with that decision:

No-one may hang or post in any place streamers, pictures, insignias or other signs that advertise Falun Dafa (Falun Gong).

No-one may distribute in any place books, magazines, audio and video products, and any other propaganda materials that advertise Falun Dafa (Falun Gong).

No-one may assemble in any place people for promotingFalun Dafa (Falun Gong) activities, such as "synthesizing energy" or "fostering the Falun law."

Activities, such as assemblies, parades, and demonstrations held in the form of sitting in and submitting petitions, for the purpose of protecting and advertising Falun Dafa (Falun Gong) are prohibited.

All forms of activities of inciting the public to disturb social order through fabricating and distorting facts, or spreading rumours deliberately, are prohibited.

No-one may organize, link up, and command activities of contesting relevant government decisions.

Those whose acts of violating the above rules constitute a crime shall be held accountable for their crime; and if their acts do not constitute a crime, they shall be disciplined or punished according to the law.

(signed) The PRC Ministry of Public Security

Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Banning Heretical Cult Organizations, and Preventing and Punishing Cult Activities

(Adopted at the 12th Session of the Standing Committee of the Ninth NPC on October 30, 1999)

To maintain social stability, protect the interests of the people, and guarantee the smooth progress of reform and opening and the socialist modernization drive, it is imperative to ban heretical cult organizations, and prevent and punish cult activities. In line with the Constitution and relevant laws, the following decision is hereby made:

1. Heretical cult organizations shall be resolutely banned according to law, and all of their criminal activities shall be dealt with severely. Heretical cults, operating under the guise of religion, qigong or other forms, employ various means to disturb social order and jeopardize people's lives and property and economic development, and they must be banned according to law and punished resolutely. People's courts, people's procuratorates, public security, national security, and judicial and administrative organs shall fulfill their respective duties and join efforts in carrying out these tasks. To be severely dealt with according to law are those who organize and take advantage of cult organizations to violate national laws and administrative regulations, gather a crowd to make trouble, disrupt social order, and deceive others, cause deaths, rape women, swindle people out their money and property or commit other crimes with superstition and heresy.

2. The principle of combining education and punishment should be followed in order to unite and educate the majority of the deceived members and to mete out severe punishment to the handful of criminals. In the process of handling cult organizations according to law, people who, unaware of the truth, have participated in cult activities shall be differentiated from the criminal elements who organize and take advantage of cult organizations for illegal activities and to intentionally destroy social stability. The deceived members shall not be prosecuted. The organizers, plotters, leaders and core members who have committed crimes shall be firmly investigated and given criminal sanctions according to law; those who have confessed their crimes or made contributions to the investigations shall be dealt with leniently, given reduced term of a sentence or exempted from punishment in accordance with the law.

3. Long-term, comprehensive publicity of and education in the Constitution and laws shall be carried out among all citizens, and knowledge of science and culture be popularized. Banning heretical cult organizations and punishing heretical cult activities according to law is conducive to protecting normal religious activities and the citizens' freedom of religious belief. The masses of people should be fully aware of the inhumane and anti-social nature of heretic cults so that they can knowingly oppose and resist the influences of cult organizations, enhance their awareness of the law and abide by national laws.

4. In the effort to prevent and fight against heretical cult activities, all social forces shall be mobilized and organized, and comprehensive measures adopted. The people's governments and judicial bodies at all levels shall earnestly implement the responsibility system and take it an important long-term task to guard against the emergence and spread of heretical cult organizations, and prevent and punish heretical cult activities, thereby maintaining social stability.

Explanations of the Supreme People's Court and Supreme People's Procuratorate Concerning Laws Applicable to Handling Cases of Organizing and Employing Heretical Cult Organizations to Commit Crimes

(Adopted at the 1079th Meeting of the Judicial Committee of the Supreme People's Court on October 9, 1999 and at the 47th Meeting of the Ninth Procuratorial Committee of the Supreme People's Procuratorate on October 8, 1999)

To punish according to law the crimes of organizing and employing heretical cult organizations to engage in criminal activities, and in line with related regulations of the Criminal Law, the following explanations on several issues in relation to specific laws applicable to handling such cases are hereby made:

1. "Heretical cult organizations" in Article 300 in the Criminal Law refer to those illegal organizations that have been established under the guise of religion, qigong or other forms, deifying their leading members, enchanting and deceiving others by concocting and spreading superstitious fallacies, recruiting and controlling their members, and endangering the society.

2. Punishment shall be determined and meted out to those who organize and employ heretical cult organizations and have fallen into one of the following circumstances according to Article 300 (1) in the Criminal Law:

(1) Assembling crowds to besiege and charge State organs, enterprises or institutions, and disrupt their work, production, operation, teaching and research activities order;

(2) Holding illegal assemblies, parades and demonstrations, or inciting, deceiving and organizing their members or others to gather together to besiege, charge, seize or disrupt public places or venues for religious activities, or disrupt social order;

(3) Resisting departments concerned to ban their organizations, or resuming the banned organizations or establishing other heretical cult organizations, or continuing their heretical cult activities;

(4) Instigating, deceiving and organizing their members or others to refuse fulfilling their legal obligations, with the case being serious;

(5) Publishing, printing, duplicating and distributing publications spreading fallacies of cults, and printing symbols of heretical cult organizations; and

(6) Other activities that violate State laws and administrative regulations.

A case shall be regarded as "especially serious" if it involves any of the following while conducting the above-mentioned activities:

(1) Setting up organizations or recruiting members across provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government;

(2) Collaborating with overseas agencies, organizations or individuals to engage in heretical cult activities;

(3) Publishing, printing, duplicating and distributing publications spreading fallacies of cults, and printing symbols of heretical cult organizations, involving a huge amount of copies and sales values; and

(4) Instigating, deceiving and organizing their members or others to violate State laws and administrative regulations, resulting in serious consequences.

3. Cases of setting up and employing heretical cult organizations to deceive others and cause deaths in Article 300 (2) in the Criminal Law refer to the cases of establishing and using heretical cult organizations to concoct and spread superstitious fallacies, deceive their members or others to practice fast and inflict wounds and ill-treatment on themselves, or prevent patients from taking normal medical treatment, resulting in deaths.

A case shall be regarded as "especially serious" if any of the following occurs:

(1) Causing three deaths or more;

(2) Causing fewer than three deaths, but serious injuries to many people;

(3) Those who have received criminal or administrative penalties for engaging in heretical cult activities again establish and use heretical cult organizations to deceive others and cause deaths; and

(4) Causing other especially serious consequences.

4. Those, who establish and use cult organizations to concoct and spread superstitious fallacies, and instigate and coerce their members or others to commit suicide or inflict wounds on themselves, shall be deemed to have committed intentional homicide or intentional harming and be punished according to the provisions in Articles 232 and 234 in the Criminal Law.

5. Those, who organize and use heretical cult organizations to sexually exploit women or young girls by seducing, coercing, deceiving or other ways using superstitious fallacies, shall be deemed to have committed rape or raping underage girls and be punished according to the provisions in Article 236 in the Criminal Law.

6. Those, who organize and use heretical cult organizations and swindle money and property from others by various deceiving means, shall be deemed to have committed swindle and be punished according to the provisions in Article 266 in the Criminal Law.

7. Those, who establish and use heretical cult organizations to organize, plot, carry out and instigate activities of splitting the country, endangering national unification, or subverting the State power and overthrowing the socialist system, shall be convicted crimes and be punished according to the provisions in Articles 103, 105 and 113 in the Criminal Law.

8. All the money and property collected through various means by heretical cult organizations and the criminal offenders who establish and use heretical cult organizations to disrupt the implementation of laws, and tools and publicity materials used for criminal activities shall be confiscated according to law.

9. Organizers, plotters and leaders who establish and use cult organizations for criminal activities and the enthusiastic participants who refuse to mend their ways despite repeated admonition shall be investigated and affixed the criminal responsibility according to the provisions in the Criminal Law and this Explanations. Those, who have confessed their crimes or made contributions to the investigations, may be dealt with leniently, given reduced term of a sentence or exempted from punishment in accordance with the law.

Those, who were deceived or coerced into heretical cult organizations and have already withdrawn from such organizations and no longer participate in heretical cult activities, shall not be dealt with as offenders.

Copyright notice: This document is published with the permission of the copyright holder and producer Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB). The original version of this document may be found on the offical website of the IRB at http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/. Documents earlier than 2003 may be found only on Refworld.